Living in a Civil Society

Purpose

Students will define and explain the importance of individual and civic responsibilities; they will also explain the importance in a democratic republic of responsible participation by citizens in voluntary civil associations/ nongovernmental organizations that comprise civil society. Using desktop publisher software, students will create an informational brochure representing a civil issue for which they are either an advocate for or against.

Materials

For the teacher: chalk, chalkboard
For each student: paper, pencil, access to computers, desktop publishing software

Activity

A. Pre-Activity Discussion

1. Explain that we face several types of responsibilities every day, such as individual and civic responsibilities.
2. Ask students to give some examples of individual responsibilities.
3. Make a list on the chalkboard as students give examples.
4. Explain that civic responsibilities focus more on a citizen's relationship to the government and ask students to name several examples of civic responsibilities.
5. Make a second list on the chalkboard with the civil responsibilities that students suggest and guide students to compare the two lists.
6. Emphasize the importance of a citizen's role in monitoring the government and involvement in civic affairs.

B. Strength in Numbers

1. Explain that there are several volunteer groups that actively participate in civil society and responsibly monitor the government. Have students name all such organizations that they know.
2. Discuss Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) as one example of such an organization and explain that MADD is comprised of volunteers who advocate against drunk driving.
3. Tell students that these mothers actively educate the public on the dangers of drunk driving through several different media, such as television, meetings, and brochures.

Technology Literacy Standards

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII
1	X	X	X	X		X	X
2	X	X	X		X	X	X
3	X		X			X	X
4		X				X	X
5						X	X
6		X				X	
7						X	
8				X		X	
9						X	
10							
11				X		X	
12				X		X	
13				X			
14							
15				X			
16							

| X | = This Technology Literacy Standard is addressed in this lesson. |

| | = This Technology Literacy Standard is not addressed in this lesson. |

4. Explain that MADD has also influenced the government to pass harsher drunk driving laws by petitioning and lobbying elected officials.
5. Tell students that some MADD members attend drunk driving court cases to remind the judge that the public is concerned about the punishment of drunk drivers.

C. Taking Responsibility
1. Ask students to brainstorm some civil issues that they would advocate for or against.
2. Have students make a list of the suggested issues.
3. Divide the class into small groups.
4. Tell students that each group should pick an issue from the list.
5. Explain that each group will act as a civic organization to advocate for or against their chosen issue.
6. Tell students that they will deliver a small presentation to the class. Using desktop publishing software, they will create an informational brochure which represents their issue—whether they are and advocate for or against their chosen civil issue.
7. Explain that they must include the following elements in their presentation and in their informational brochure:
   - Name of their organization
   - The issue they chose
   - The importance of that issue
   - How they will educate the public
   - How they will monitor the government
   - Why civic organizations in general are important to a democratic republic
8. Encourage students to be creative with the format of their presentations and allow students class time to work on the presentations and on the computer using desktop publishing software (to create the informational brochure.)
9. Have students deliver their presentations; have students provide (either print or make copies) enough brochures for everyone in the class. Guide a class discussion of each one.

Questions for Review ─────────────────

Basic Concepts and Processes
After students have created their projects, ask them:

📖 What civic issues are currently receiving the most public attention?

💡 How do these issues relate to our individual responsibilities?

📖 How would our government function without civic groups?